

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 4 of 20 May 2009 have been rejected under 35 USC §103 based on US 3 358 167 (to Shanks) in view of US 6 254 318 (to Sica).

Remedy to these objections by the Examiner is proposed by a new main claim which delimits the scope more clearly or the cited prior art.

The amended single claim more clearly emphasizes, it is submitted, the distinguishing features of the invention and its advantages over the prior art.

One main difference between the cited prior art and the present invention is, as has been pointed out previously, that the second end part of the spacer has a plurality of outwardly radially-projecting lugs distributed around the circumference of the spacer with intermediate spacing between them. This has now been specifically recited in the claim. Not only can the end surface of the outer tube make contact with the lugs, in order to facilitate the assembly of the outer tube and the end cap when assembling the fluorescent lamp, the intermediate spaces between the lugs allow adhesive filler to easily fill out the gaps between the lugs, providing effective grip and cohesion between the outer tube, the end cap and the axial spacer. This advantage is not provided nor indicated in either of the cited documents Shanks or Sica. It is submitted that the present invention, as now more carefully defined in the claim, provides for easy centering of the main tube and the outer tube in relation to the end cap.

Shanks is cited as the main reference under §103 and shows a spacer 29 holding the main tube of a fluorescent lamp with an outer tube 12, which must be inserted into the guide elements G as is so graphically and pedagogically illustrated in the annotated Fig. 3 rendered in the Office Action. This requires careful sighting for assembly and does not provided for adhesive filler material to lock all the elements in place.

This difference has the effect, during the assembly, that the main tube having the spacer comprising the guide elements will center the main tube coaxially in the outer tube at the same time as a joining layer of insulating paste can be applied easily filling the gaps between the guide elements for joining the spacer with the outer tube. Even though Shanks shows centering of the main tube and the outer tube, the outer tube must be inserted in the slot and there are no lugs and gaps between them provided by the guide elements, These gaps according to the new claim provided for easy admission of adhesive paste and strong grip and adhesion when it hardens.

These distinguishing features make it extremely easy to correctly place and fix the component parts to each other in the assembly of the fluorescent lamp.

Shanks in view of Sica, however, would not, it is respectfully submitted, result in the lamp as now defined in the claim. The spacer 18 of Sica provides no abutment for the end of the protective tube as does the present invention and each of the adhesive layers 18a and 22 require precise fitting of the tubes in each other. The teachings of Shanks and Sica could not be combined to provide the invention as now disclosed in the claim. In particular there would not be provided any radial lugs distributed with intermediate spaces between them around the circumference of said axial spacer, which is the crucial aspect of the invention providing such easy assembly of the lamp and at the same time secure fixing by means of adhesive, the component parts to each other.

We would maintain the arguments presented in the previous response regarding the non-obvious advantages of the present invention over previously cited prior art .

In the event there are any questions concerning this Amendment, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned so that prosecution of the application may be expedited.

No additional fees beyond the extension fee and the RCE fee are believed to be due at this time. However, if necessary to effect a timely response, the Commissioner is authorised to deduct the necessary fees from Deposit account No. 501249.

Respectfully submitted,

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